EXTRACTS

FROM THE

TREATISE OF PROCLUS

ON THE

SUBSISTENCE OF EVIL.

In this treatise Proclus inquires, first, Whether there is such a thing as evil? secondly, If there is, whether it is in intellectual natures? thirdly, If evil is in sensibles, whether it subsists according to a principal cause? fourthly, If it does not subsist according to a principal cause, whether any essence must be assigned to it, or whether it must be admitted to be perfectly unessential, and without hypostasis? fifthly, And if this be the case, how does it subsist, another principle existing, and whence does it originate, and how far does it proceed? And farther, still, sixthly, how, since Providence exists, does evil subsist, and whence is it derived? If the father of the universe not only produced the nature of good, but was also willing that there should be nothing evil any where, by what contrivance or art does evil subsist, which the Demiurgus did not wish to subsist? For it is not lawful to assert that he was willing some things should subsist, but produced others, since in divine natures

Digitized by Google

to be willing, and *to produce* are simultaneous and conjoined. Hence evil is not only a thing contrary to the will of divinity, but is also without hypostasis, divinity not only not producing it (for this it is not even lawful to suppose) but not suffering it to subsist. Proclus answers, that physical evil, viz. the evil which is corruptive of the essence, power and energy of a thing, is not evil but good, because it subsists on account of good, and because generation is from corruption, of which two the world consists, and by which the order of the universe is adorned. There is not, however, such a thing as unmingled evil, and evil itself, or an eternal idea, form and essence of evil, but moral evil is mixed with good, and so far as it is good, it subsists from divinity, but so far as evil, it is derived from another cause which is impotent. For evil is nothing else than a greater or less declination, departure, defect and privation from *the good itself*, and which is good alone, in the same manner as darkness from the sun. It is the debility and absence of power in energizing, but is not power. And that which is evil to partial natures, is not evil to the universe.

2. Evil is not in the Gods, nor in the triple government of the better genera, viz. it is neither in angels; (for how could we call them messengers and elucidators of the Gods, if evil of any kind was in them who are the images of the divinities, and who dwelling in the vestibules of deity participate of its goodness?) nor in dæmons, nor in heroes. If divinity produced evil, he either produced it contrary to his nature, or every thing thence subsisting will be boniform, and the progeny of the goodness that abides in him. But as it is said, it is not the property of fire to impart cold, nor of good to produce evil from itself. Either, therefore, it must be said that evil is not, if it is necessary to its existence that it should be produced by divinity, or that it is, and does not originate from deity. Against those who assert that evil is primarily in dæmons, he observes as follows: There are certain persons who attribute passions to dæmons, and say that some of their passions are according to nature as when they tragically speak of their deaths, and different generations; but that others are from choice only, as when they denominate certain dæmons base and

Digitized by Google

evil, who, they also say, defile souls, lead them to matter, and draw them down from their journey to the heavens to the subterranean region. It is necessary, however, to ask these persons, whether are the dæmons, which you say are evil, such to themselves [or in their own nature,] or not to themselves, but to others? For if they are evil to themselves, one of two things must follow, either that they must remain in evil for ever, or that they must be susceptive of transmutation. And if indeed they are always evil, how can that which subsists from the Gods be perpetually evil? For it is better not to be at all, than to be always evil. But if they are transmuted, they are not essentially evil, but are evil from habitude, in which there is the better and the worse, and another species of life. Dæmons, however, are always in the ratio of dæmons, and each of them is always in its own order. But if they are indeed good to themselves, but evil to others whom they lead into a worse condition, it is just as if some one should call teachers depraved, and certain pedagogues, who ranking as the chastisers of offences, do not suffer the offenders to pursue a better order in a fluctuating manner, instead of an order which is adapted to them. Or as if some one should denominate those [officers] evil, who standing before things of a sacred nature [in temples] keep the impure from entering into the sanctuary, because they prohibit them from the participation of the interior rites. Hence, it is not evil to perform this office, but to be of such an order, and to deserve such a prohibition.' If, therefore, of the dæmons that are in the world, some lead souls upward, but others keep such in their own manners, as are not yet able to ascend, we cannot justly call either of them evil, neither those

[1] The Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite, in his treatise On the Divine Names has evidently taken what follows from this passage of Proclus: ουκ αρα ουδε εν αγγελοις εστι το κακον, αλλα κολαζειν τους αμαρτανοντας εισι κακοι. τουτῳ γουν τῳ λογῳ και οι σωφρονισται των πλημμελουντων κακοι. και των ιερεων οι τον βεβηλον των θειων μυστηριων απειργοντες. καιτοι ουδε το κολαζεσθαι κακον, αλλα το αξιον γενεσθαι κολασεως. i. e. "Neither, therefore, is there evil in angels, unless it should be said they are evil because they punish offenders. For the same reason, however, the castigators of those that act wrong, are evil. And in a similar manner those priests are evil who prohibit the profane from divine mysteries. Though indeed it is not evil to be punished, but to deserve to be punished." The reader who peruses the above-mentioned treatise of this Dionysius will find that he has extracted largely from the present work of Proclus.

Digitized by Google

that separate from nor those that detain souls [in a corporeal life.] For it is necessary that there should also be those dæmons who coerce the soul that is defiled with vice, and is unworthy of a progression into the heavens, in the place which surrounds the earth. Neither, therefore, in these, does reason appear to discover evil. For whatever they do, they perform according to their own nature, and always after the same manner. But this is not evil.

3. Evil in souls is a debility of not always and uniformly adhering to better natures, and to good. Hence arises their descent to things subordinate, their oblivion, their malefic inclination to things conversant with body, and their discord with reason. According to some, matter is that which is primarily evil, and evil itself, and the debility of souls arises from their lapse into matter. This Proclus denies, and says that both body and matter originate from deity, and that both are the progeny of divinity. He adds, that matter is the first indefinite, and that essential infinity, in the same manner as a mixed body, depends on one cause, divinity. That souls sinned before they were thrust into matter. That there are not two principles [matter and deity.] And that matter is neither good nor evil, but a thing necessary, and distant in the last degree from *the good itself*.

4. Of good there is one eternal, definite, universal and producing cause, viz. God; but of evils the causes are manifold and infinite, some to souls, and others to bodies. They are also fluctuating, indefinite, inordinate, and particular, surrounding the nature of souls and bodies from necessity, and arising from impotency, incommensuration void of design, unadaptation, debility, and the victory of a subordinate nature. Good has an hypostasis, but evil a parhypostasis or a deviation from hypostasis. Good is form, but evil is without form, and is as it were privation.

5. Evil possesses its power of acting, and its capability from a contrary good, which becomes debile and inefficacious on account of the mixture of evil; and evil is allotted its efficacy and energy on account of the

Digitized by Google

presence of good, for both are in one. Thus in bodies, that which is preternatural, debilitates that which is according to nature, the energy, of nature being in this case dormant, and order, in which good consists, being dissolved. Thus also in souls, evil when it vanquishes good, uses its power, viz. the power of reason, to its own purposes, and makes it subservient to desire. Each of these also imparts something according to its own nature, viz. the one power, but the other debility; because of itself evil is neither adapted to act, nor to possess power; for all power is good, and all energy is an extension of power. And this Plato knowing, says, that injustice itself is of itself debile and inactive; but through the presence of justice possesses its power, and is led forth into energy, not abiding in its own nature. Nor does evil alone consist in a privation of life, because being which subsists prior to life, gives also to evil a participation of life. All life, however, is of itself power; but evil subsisting in a foreign power is contrary to good, employing its own power for the purpose of opposing good. And the more power indeed is inherent in it, the greater are the energies and works of evil, and the less it possesses of power, the less are its energies and works. In bodies too as soon as the powers of nature cease, the preternatural energy which is in them ceases also; and hence, all order is entirely dissolved, that which is preternatural being more abundant. When the soul, therefore, receives an increase from that which is contrary to good, according to its base and formless nature, but is diminished according to virtue and energy, then it becomes at the same time debile and inefficacious. For the augmentation is not then from power, that the transition might be to something greater; but it arises from the presence of the contrary to power, just as if frigidity should use the power of heat to the accomplishment of its own work, vanquishing and subjecting its power. The soul, therefore, being deficient through the absence of good, and possessing more of privation in proportion as it has more of deficiency, becoming also more debile in its energies through a diminution of virtue, is indeed more evil, but performs less.

Digitized by Google

And how indeed could the increase since it is evil be from power, if the work of all power is to preserve that in which it is, but evil dissipates every thing of which it is the evil. Hence evil is of itself inefficacious and impotent. If also, as Plato says, it is involuntary, it will not be the object of the will. And thus it will be a privation of the first triad of *the good*, viz. of *will*, *power*, and *energy*. For good indeed, is the object of the will, and is in its own nature powerful and efficacious; but evil is unwished for, is debile and inefficacious. For that is not the object of the will to any thing which is corruptive of it, nor does power wish for that which may corrupt it, nor does energy wish not to have its hypostasis according to power. But evil is desired in consequence of appearing to be good; and we say that evil seems to be an object of the will, on account of the mixture of good with it. Power, therefore, and energy are apparently in evil, [but are not so in reality] because they are not essentially inherent in it, nor so far as it is evil, but they extrinsically accede to it, as that to which a parhypostasis belongs. Hence, as it appears to me, this is what Socrates shows in the Theætetus to those who are able to understand his meaning, viz. that evil is neither privation, nor the contrary to good. For privation is not able to effect any thing, nor does it in short possess any power; nor does that which is contrary to good of itself possess either power or energy. But he denominates evil in a certain respect *subcontrary* to good, because of itself indeed, or essentially, it is privation, yet because it is not altogether perfect privation, but in a similar manner with habit changes from capacity, it is from thence constituted in energizing in the part of contrariety, and is neither perfect privation, nor contrary, but subcontrary to good.

7. There are these three things which may debilitate, and in which there is evil, viz. a partial soul; the image of soul in animals; and body. The evil to body is to have a preternatural subsistence; the evil to the image of soul is to be in a state of deviation from reason; and the evil to soul [i. e. to the rational soul,] is to deviate from intellect. The defect of life according to reason is the malady of this life; but ignorance and a privation of intellect are baseness, whether this takes place about the

Digitized by Google

dianoetic or the doxastic power; and if about the former it is a want of science, but if about the latter, of art. Baseness, however, and malady, subsist in one way in cognitions, and in another in impulses. For the irrational appetites are hostile to the life which consists in action, and the many senses and precipitate imaginations intervening in the contemplative energy destroy its purity and immateriality. Hence unbecoming imaginations, or evil consent and base choice arise, either from an external source and in various actions, or internally according to anger and desire. That also which is preternatural is twofold. For in the body, it is either deformity, as in monsters, or malady, in consequence of the order and commensuration of the body being dissolved, as in corruption, disease, and pain.

In many persons meditated evil, and which abides occultly within the soul, is benefited as being base and unbecoming. But when it subsists in energy the quality of it becomes apparent. It is manifested, however, by penitence and the consciousness of the soul. For the medical art also, in the opening of ulcers, and leading forth externally the inwardly concealed cause which produced the malady, exhibits an image of the operations of Providence, which permits base deeds and passions, in order that the perpetrators of them being changed from the habit which they have acquired, and which is inflated with evils, may assume the principle of a better period and life. But whatever passions are within the soul, are attended with this good, that they always lead the soul to a proper condition, her improper choice being accompanied with punishment. Thus also the law which is in souls leads each to its appropriate state, and to that desert which is derived from Providence.

9. Evil cannot exist, if it is admitted that it is not contrary to good, because all things, and even evil itself, are for the sake of good. Divinity, therefore, is not the cause of evil. For evil, so far as evil never originates from thence, but from other causes which as we have said generate not according to power, but on account of debility. Hence it appears to me

Digitized by Google

that Plato [1] when he places all things about the king of all, and says that all things are for his sake, (even things which are not good appearing to be good, and in a similar manner belonging to beings) calls him the cause of every thing good, and not at once the cause of all things, for he is not the cause of evil, but is the cause of every being, and of every thing so far as it is good. If, therefore, we assert these things rightly, all things will be from Providence, and evil will have a place among beings. Hence also the Gods produce evil, but they produce it as good; and they know, as possessing a unical knowledge of all things, partibles impartibly, evils according to the form of good, and multitude according to the form of *the one*. For there is one knowledge of soul, another of an intellectual nature, and another of the Gods themselves. For the first of these indeed, is a self-motive, the second, an eternal, and the third an indivisible and unical knowledge, knowing and producing all things by *the one*.

For the further information of the reader on this most important subject, the Subsistence of Evil, the following admirable extract is added, from the Commentaries of Proclus On the Timæus, (p. 112.) The Comment is on these words, "Divinity being willing that all things should be good, and that as much as possible nothing should be evil;" and is as follows:

"The divine fabrication and intellectual production, proceeds from things impartible to such as are partible, from the united to the multiplied, and from things without interval to corporeal masses that are every way distended with interval. This also the discourse about it adumbrating, in the first place, *enunciatively* celebrates the final cause, afterwards *discursively*, and in the third place, delivers *in an evolved manner*, the whole orderly distribution and progression from it. For the words "he was good," *uniformly* indeed comprehend every thing final, and the most

[1] In his 2d. Epistle.

Digitized by Google

divine of causes. But the words, "In that which is good, envy is never inherent about any thing; and being without this, he was willing that all things should be generated as much as possible similar to himself," effect this *discursively*.[1] For after the one will of intellect, he introduces the divided contemplation of it. And in the present words, he delivers to us the intelligence of divinity now proceeding into all multitude and interval, *evolving* every demiurgic providence, and all the parts of fabrication. Moreover, the third of these is in continuity with the second, and the second with the first. For since the first particle was, "he was good," on this account the second begins from the good, but proceeds as far as to the will of the father. But the third beginning from will, delivers the whole of his providential energy. For if he was good, he was willing to make all things good. But if he was willing, he made them to be so, and led the universe into order. For providence indeed, is suspended from will, but will from goodness. And thus much concerning the order and connexion of the words.

Let us however consider what this will is, in order that we may understand how it is conjoined with goodness. Superessential union itself therefore, and which is of itself exempt from beings, is indeed one, ineffable, and indefinite, having the uncircumscribed, and the incomprehensible in *the one itself*. If therefore, it be requisite to survey in this, the above mentioned uniform triad, *goodness* indeed has the precedency, but *will* is the second, and *providence* is the third; goodness indeed, producing the perfect, the sufficient, and the desirable; but will exhibiting exuberant plenitude, the extended, and the generative; and providence imparting the efficacious, the perfective, and the undefiled. According to this ineffable and united hyparxis of the triad, the intelligible also is triply divided into essence, power, and energy; essence indeed, being firmly established in it, and being self-perfect; but power having a never-failing and infinite progression; and energy being allotted perfection, and essential production. And again, intellect after the same manner is triply divided, into being, life, and the intellectual. For the first of these

[1] διεξοδικως is omitted in the original.

Digitized by Google

indeed, is the supplier of its existence, the second of its life, and the third, of its gnostic power. After these also, soul is divided, into that which is the object of science, into science, and into that which is scientific. For the first of these is that which is known, the second is knowledge, and the third is that which derives its completion from both these. These triads therefore being four, as goodness is to will, so is essence to power, being to life, and the object of science to science. And as will is to providence, so is power to energy, life to intellect, and science to that which is scientific. For essence, being, and the object of science, have an order analogous to goodness. For the connective, the stable, the uniform, and the perfective, pertain to goodness. But power, life, and science, are analogous to will. For the self-begotten, and that which comprehends and measures all things, belong to will. And energy, intellect, and that which is scientific, pertain to providence. For the efficacious, and that which proceeds through and antecedently comprehends all things, are the resemblances of divine providence. Since therefore, the demiurgus also is a God, and an imparticipable intellect, so far as he is a God indeed, he possesses goodness, will, and providence; but as intelligible, he has essence, power, and energy; and as intellect, he is, and has life, and a knowledge of wholes. The monad also which he possesses is suspended from unity. And thus much concerning will.

Consequent to this, it remains to enquire how the demiurgus wished all things to be good, and if this is possible, and in what manner. For it may be said, if he was willing that this should be the case, it would be requisite that the progression of things should stop at the Gods and undefiled essences. If however, he not only fabricated these, but also brutes, and reptiles, and men, and every thing material, he was not willing that all things should be good. For he was not willing that better natures should exist, but also fabricated such as are worse. If he had been willing therefore, that all things should be good, he would have stopped his fabrication at the Gods. We reply however, that if the progression of things was only as far as to the Gods, all things would not be good. For first natures being allotted the last order, the good would be destroyed; since being able and willing to generate through their good-

Digitized by Google

ness, yet in consequence of an arrangement as the last of things, they would become unprolific and not good. Our opponents therefore say, if all things are good, the progression is as far as to the Gods. But we say, if the progression of things extends only as far as to the Gods, all things are not good. For if a divine nature is unprolific how is it good? But it will be unprolific, if it is the last of things. For every thing which generates is better than that which is generated. But the less excellent nature not existing, that which is more excellent will have no subsistence. Let there be the Gods therefore, and let them have the first order. But after the Gods, let there be a progression[1] as far as to matter itself; and let us give a transition to all beings, from the first to the last of things. And neither let there be any thing wanting even of the last of beings, nor any vacuum. For what vacuum can there be, when things characterized by *itself*[2] have the first subsistence, those that rank as the second proceed from these, those of the third order, proceed from these and others, those in the fourth rank, are generated from things characterized by the term *another*, and those in the fifth rank being *others* only; and on each side of these those natures subsisting which are dissimilarly similar?[3] Such therefore, being the continuity in things, what can be deficient? Immoveable natures being first established, self-motive natures having the second, and alter-motive natures the third rank, all of which are the last of things. For all beings derive their completion from the above-mentioned orders. In short, the production of things may be shown to be continued in many ways; and if you are willing so to speak, analogy subsisting from on high as far as to the last of things, according to the well-ordered progression of all beings from *the one*.

Let therefore, all these things be acknowledged, and let the generation of beings be extended as far as to nothing; but whether is there nothing evil in these, or shall we admit that there is in a certain respect, and that

[1] προοδον is omitted in the original.

[2] Viz. self-subsistent super-essential natures; for to these the αυτο, or *itself* primarily belongs. The next to these are intellects. Those in the third rank, are souls. Those in the fourth, the natures that are divided about bodies. And those in the fifth and last rank are bodies.

[3] Viz. *the one*, and matter.

Digitized by Google

there is what is called depravity in bodies, and in souls? For some have been led by this doubt to take away evil entirely; but others have been induced to deny a providence, in consequence of believing, that if providence has a subsistence, all things are good. For if indeed divinity was willing there should be evil, how can he be good? For it is the province of that which is essentially good to benefit every thing, just as it is of that which is essentially hot, to give heat. But it is not lawful for *the good* to effect any thing else than what is good. And if divinity was not[1] willing there should be evil, how can it have a subsistence? For something will exist contrary to the will of the father of all things. Such therefore is the doubt.

We must say however, conformably to the doctrine of Plato according to our preceptor, that the habitude of divinity with respect to things subsists in a different manner from that of ours. And again, that the habitude of things with reference to deity is different from their habitude with reference to us. For wholes have a relation to parts different from that of parts to each other. To divinity therefore nothing is evil, not even of the things which are called evil. For he uses these also to a good purpose. But again, to partial natures there is a certain evil, these being naturally adapted to suffer by it. And the same thing is to a part indeed evil, but to the universe and to wholes is not evil, but good. For so far as it is a being, and so far as it participates of a certain order, it is good. For this thing which is said to be evil, if you apprehend it to be destitute of all good, you will make it to be beyond even that which in no respect whatever is. For as *the good itself* is prior to being, so evil itself is posterior to the nothingness of non-entity. For that which is most distant from the good is evil, and not that which has no kind of subsistence.[2] If therefore, that which in no respect whatever is, has more of subsistence than evil itself, but this is impossible, it is much more impossible that there should be such a thing as evil itself.

[1] μη is wanting in the original.

[2] *The good itself* is prior to being. Nothing or non-being is not that which is most distant from *the good*; for it is that in which the procession of being ends, but that which is most distant from *the good* is *evil itself*. Hence, *evil itself* is posterior to non-entity.

Digitized by Google

If however, that which is entirely evil has no subsistence, but evil is complicated with good, you give it a place among beings, and you make it good to other things. And indeed, how is it possible it should not, if it ranks among beings? For that which participates of being, participates also of unity, and that which participates of unity, participates likewise of good. Hence evil if it is, participates of good; because evil has not an unmingled subsistence, and is not entirely deprived of order, and indefinite. Who therefore made it to be such? Who imparted to it measure and order, and bound? It is evident that it is the demiurgus, who rendered all things similar to himself. For he filled both wholes and parts with good. But if he benefits all things, and colours evil itself with good, there is nothing evil according to the power of divinity and of recipients. For power is twofold, one being that of divinity which benefits the depravity that is so abundantly seen;[1] but the other being that of recipients, which participate of the goodness of the demiurgus according to the measure of their order [in the scale of beings]. In consequence therefore of the demiurgus being willing that there should be nothing evil, nothing is evil. But if certain persons accuse him as the cause of evil, because he gave subsistence to partial natures, they take away the fabrication of the world, subvert the prolific power of wholes, and confound the nature of things first and last.

That we assert these things however, conformably to the opinion of Plato, may be easily seen from his writings. For in the Politicus, he clearly says, "that the world obtained from[2] its maker all beautiful things, but from its former habit, all such injustice and evil, as are produced within the heavens." For because there is generation, and also corruption, that which is preternatural has a subsistence. And because the deformity of matter fills partial souls with inelegance, through an association with it, on this account that which is not conformable to reason is allotted a certain resemblance of subsistence. At the same time however, all these particulars become beautiful through the goodness of the maker of the

[1] For πολυαϱατον, it is necessary to read πολυοϱατον.

[2] For περι here, it is requisite to read παϱα.

Digitized by Google

universe. But in the Republic, Plato assigns no other cause of good than God, and says that certain other causes of evils are to be investigated; through which he manifests that evils do not derive their subsistence from divinity. For it is not, says he, the province of fire to refrigerate, nor of snow to heat, nor of that which is all-good to produce evil. And he asserts that certain partial causes of these are to be admitted, and such as are indefinite. For it is not in evils as in things that are good, viz. that *the one*, and what is primarily good, precede multitude; and this on account of the indefinite diffusion of evil. The words *others* therefore and *certain*, evince that the causes of evil are partial and indefinite. But in the Theætetus he says "that it is neither possible for evils to be abolished, nor for them to be in the Gods, but that they revolve from necessity about the mortal nature, and this place of our abode." If therefore, evil revolves necessarily in the mortal place, it will not be according to Plato, that which in no respect whatever has a subsistence, and which is exempt from all beings. So that according to him evil exists, is from partial causes, and is benefited through the boniform providence of the demiurgus, because there is nothing which is entirely evil, but every thing is in a certain respect accomplished conformably to justice and divinity.

For we may make the following division: Of all that the world contains, some things are wholes, but others parts. And of parts, some eternally preserve their own good, such as a partial intellect, and partial dæmons, but others are not always able to preserve their proper good. And of these, some are alter-motive, but others self-motive. And of self-motive natures, some have evil established in their choice; but in others, it terminates in actions. With respect to wholes therefore, they are perfectly good, supplying not only themselves, but also parts with good. Such things however, as are parts, and yet preserve their own good, possess good secondarily and partially. But such as are parts, and alter-motive, deriving their subsistence from other things, are suspended from the providence of them, and are transmuted in a becoming manner, as is the case with such bodies as are generated and corrupted. For if it is necessary that there should be generation, it is also necessary that there

Digitized by Google

should be corruption. For generation subsists according to mutation, and is a certain mutation. But if there is corruption, it is necessary that the preternatural should be secretly introduced. As therefore, that which is corrupted, is indeed corrupted with reference to itself, but is not destroyed with reference to the universe; for it is either air or water, or something else into which it is changed; thus also that which is preternatural, is indeed with respect to itself disordered, but with respect to the universe has an orderly arrangement. For, if though it should be destroyed and entirely deprived of order, it would not dissolve the order of the universe, how is it possible that when having a preternatural subsistence which is of itself nothing when deprived of all order, it can destroy the whole arrangement of things? But again, partial natures which are self-motive indeed, and whose energy is directed to externals, cause that which is effected by their energy to be evil to themselves, yet in a certain respect this also is good, and conformable to divinity. For since impulses and actions are from choice, actions follow elections according to justice, when he who chuses not only deserves the retribution consequent to his choice, but that also which follows from his conduct. And simply indeed, the action is not good, but to him who chuses a certain thing, and is impelled in a certain way, it is introduced according to justice; and is good to this individual and this particular life. For of goods, some are good to all things, others to such as differ according to species, and others to individuals, so far as they are individuals. For hellebore is not good to all men, nor to all bodies, nor yet to all diseased bodies, but it is good to one who is diseased in a particular manner, and is salutary from a certain principle. Whether therefore, the action is intemperate or unjust, to those who perform it indeed it is good, so far as it is conformable to justice, but simply it is not good, nor to those by whom it is done, but is to them the greatest evil. And so far as it proceeds from them and is directed to them, it is evil; but so far as it proceeds from the universe to them, it is not evil. And so far as their energy is directed to themselves, they destroy their life, becoming actually depraved; but so far as they suffer from the universe, they undergo the punishment of their choice; (just as it is said, that those who deliberate

Digitized by Google

about betraying a suppliant, subvert divinity); or they suffer the punishment of their will.

Let us however, direct our attention to what remains, viz. to such partial natures as energize self-motively, and who stop their depravity as far as to their choice. For they suffer the punishment of their cogitation alone. For, as it is said, there is a certain punishment of mere imagination, impulse and will; since the Gods govern us inwardly, and as they reward beneficent choice, so likewise they punish the contrary. But it may be said, how can choice itself have that which is conformable to justice and divinity? May we not reply, because it is necessary there should be an essence of this kind and a power of an ambiguous nature, and which verges to different lives. If therefore that which has dominion over choice is from divinity, choice also is from divinity, and if this be the case, it is good. For the electing soul alone, is transferred to another and another order. For all choice either elevates the soul, or draws it downward [to an inferior condition of being]. And if indeed the choice is from a depraved [1] soul, it is evil; but if it transfers that which chuses to its proper order, it is according to justice and good. For the choice itself introduces punishment to the electing soul. Or rather, the choice becomes punishment in him who chooses, causing the soul to apostatize from good. For as a beneficent choice becomes truly the reward of itself, so a depraved choice becomes its own punishment. For this is the peculiarity of self-motive powers. Hence there is no evil, which is not also in a certain respect good; but all things participate of providence.

If however, certain persons should ask on what account an evil-producing cause had at first a subsistence, though it should not rank among wholes, but is of a partial nature, to these it must be said, that the progression of beings is continued, and that no vacuum is left among them. Whether therefore, is it necessary that there should not be every self-motive life? But we shall thus take away many natures that are divine. Or shall we say it is necessary there should be wholes that are self-motive, but there is no necessity there should be self-motive parts?

[1] μοχθηρας is omitted in the original.

Digitized by Google

But how is it possible they should be wholes, if deprived of their proper parts?[1] And how will the continuity of beings be preserved, if wholes and self-motive natures have a prior existence, and also partial and alter-motive natures, but we entirely destroy the intermediate natures, viz. such as are self-motive indeed, but at the same time partial? And which through the partial form become connected with habitude, but through the self-motive power, are at a certain time liberated from habitude. It is necessary therefore, that there should be this life also, which is a medium in beings, and the bond of things which have as it were an arrangement contrary[2] to each other. Evil however, is not on this account natural to the soul; since she is essentially the mistress of her choice. For the animated body has an essential tendency to disease; for it is essentially corruptible; and yet disease is not according to nature. Hence disease is indeed evil to the partial nature which is allotted to connect this particular body, but is good to the wholeness of bodies. For it is necessary that what is generated from other things, should be changed into another thing. As therefore, to the nature which is in us, it is good for the nutriment to be changed, in order to the preservation of the animal; thus also to every nature it is good for a part to be corrupted, in order that the wholes may be preserved, which are always prior to parts. For if parts were generated from wholes, and the things generated should remain, all things would be rapidly consumed, in consequence of wholes becoming partial natures. For a continued ablation taking place from things of a finite nature, the whole must necessarily fail. But wholes not existing, either generation will be stopped, or mutation to partial natures will be derived from other things. Hence that which is evil to a partial nature is good to the whole life of the world.

Farther still therefore, resuming the enquiry after another manner from the beginning, if we are asked whether divinity was willing there should be evil, or was not willing, we reply that he was both. For he was willing indeed, considered as imparting being to all things. For every

[1] For the proper parts of a self-motive whole, are also self-motive.

[2] For απ' αιτιας here, it is necessary to read απεναντιας.

Digitized by Google

thing in the universe which has any kind of being proceeds from the demiurgic cause. But he was not willing, considered as producing all things good. For he concealed evil in the use of good. And if you are willing to argue physically, evil is produced *essentially* indeed from a partial soul, but *accidentally* from divinity, so far as it is evil, if it is admitted that divinity gave subsistence to the soul. Evil also so far as it is essentially good, originates from a divine cause, but accidentally from the soul. For so far as it subsists according to justice, it possesses good. Again, Plato in the Laws defines what punishment is, viz. that it appears to consume him who suffers it, and resembles the opening of ulcers. And he who is incapable [1] of being healed without a certain action, is incited to the performance of it, in order that the soul being liberated from her parturiency and stupid astonishment about that which is base, and repenting of her own evils, may begin to be purified. For base and unjust actions, when they are the objects of hope, are lovely to those that vehemently admire them, but when accomplished, fill those that perform them with repentance. And when indeed, they are the subjects of meditation, they cause the soul to be latently diseased; but when they have proceeded into energy, they demonstrate their own imbecility, but liberate the soul from the most disgraceful parturition. And some indeed, exhibit this punishment according to the whole of their life; but others according to partial energies. For he who does any thing irrational, does it from choice, is impelled to that which is the object of his choice, and leads into energy that which pre-existed in his imagination.

In short, evil is neither in intellectual natures; for the whole intellectual genus is free from all evil; nor in whole souls, or whole bodies; for all wholes are exempt from evil, as being perpetual, and always subsisting according to nature. It remains therefore, that it must be in partial souls, or in partial bodies. But neither is it in the essences of these; for all their essences are derived from divinity; nor in their powers; for these subsist according to nature. Hence it remains, that it must be in their energies. But with respect to souls, it is neither in such as are

[1] For το μεν δυναμενον in this place, it is necessary to read, το μη δυναμενον.

Digitized by Google

rational; for all these aspire after good; nor in such as are irrational; for these energize according to nature. But it subsists in the privation of symmetry [1] of these with reference to each other. And in bodies, it is neither in form; for it wishes to rule over matter; nor in matter; for it aspires after the supervening ornaments of form. But it consists in the privation of symmetry between form and matter. From which also it is evident, that every thing evil exists according to a *parypostasis*, or *resemblance of subsistence*, and that at the same time it is coloured by good; so that all things are good through the will of divinity, and as much as possible nothing is destitute of good. For it was not possible, that generation existing, evil also should not have a shadowy subsistence, since it is necessary to the perfection of the whole of things. And from what has been said, it is evident, that the will of divinity is not vain. For all things are good with reference to him, and there is not any being which is not vanquished by a portion of good. Nor are the words, "*as much as possible*," written superfluously. For they do not signify an imperfect power, but that power which rules over all things, and benefits all things through an abundance of good."

[1] For συμμετρια here, it is necessary to read ασυμμετρια.

THE END.

Digitized by Google